

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 23 March 2017

Present:

Members:

Councillor J Mutton (Cabinet Member)

Councillor J Lepoidevin (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Other Members:

Councillor L Kelly (Chair of the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board)

Employees:

People:

B Barrett, W Jackson, P Johnson, C Pallister, R Sherwood,
A Smith

Place:

S Bennett, B Hastie, S McGinty, A Walster

Public Business

31. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

32. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December, 2016 were signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

33. Agency Workers and Interim Managers - Performance Management Report Quarter 3 (1 September to 31 December, 2016)

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided performance information on the use of agency workers for the Q3 period 1 September to 31 December, 2016; which compared Q3 2016/17 with Q2 2016/17 expenditure; and which detailed Interim Manager and other agency worker spends for the same period.

Appendix 1 to the report showed the total expenditure over time on agency workers by Directorates up to and including Q3 2016/17 for spends with the Master Vendor supplier. Pertemps, including for interims. Appendix 2 to the report showed the justification of new orders placed by Directorates for agency workers during Q3 2016/17 which resulted in spend with Pertemps. Appendix 3 to the report showed equalities data for workers supplied through the Pertemps contract.

In particular, the Cabinet Member welcomed alternative solutions to agency staff. These included the development of ideas in Children's Services regarding an alternative contract that pitches hourly rates similar to those that can be earned working through an agency and, in Place Directorate, the establishment of a "pool" of workers who are contracted full time but who may be placed within any team that requires them and a "bank" of casual workers who are offered work when shifts cannot be covered. The Cabinet Member asked to be kept informed of any progress on this issue.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources:-

(1) Notes the agency/interim spend for Quarter 3

(2) Notes the work done on providing in-house solutions to providing agency and interim workers.

34. **Apprenticeship Levy**

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) that indicated that, as of April 2017, the Council will be required to pay the Apprenticeship Levy. This Levy of 0.5% of the pay bill which will be in the region of £1m and will be collected by HMRC via the PAYE system and converted into digital vouchers. The Levy contributions will be used to fund apprenticeship training moving forward, replacing the previous model of apprenticeships being funded between employers and the Skills Funding Agency.

Historically, payment for corporate apprenticeship training has been on average less than £5k per year in total. The Council's contribution also includes maintained schools and the split of the £1m is approximately £600k Council and £400k between schools. As the Levy payment is statutory and funds expire if not used, it is paramount to ensure that the City Council effectively utilises these funds.

The report indicated that it was proposed to use the levy funds:-

(1) To provide training to existing and future apprenticeships

(2) To offer apprenticeships to existing members of staff, initially in Leadership and Management Development and Project Management (for non-project managers) and to explore training needs across the Council. In addition the introduction of Degree Level Social Work Apprenticeships were being explored nationally and Coventry would play a role in developing the Standards, although this would not be ready for delivery for another 2 years.

(3) To expand current work with schools. A range of information relating to the Levy had been sent to all maintained schools across the City and the Apprenticeship Team were working closely with Head teachers to discuss this further.

The Cabinet Member stressed the importance of find innovative ways of spending the Levy and ensuring that the Council did not lose any of this funding.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources approves Option 1 as detailed in the report in relation to utilising the Apprenticeship Levy and that:-

- (1) The Council's existing apprenticeship programme continues to be funded in line with the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy**
- (2) That apprenticeships be offered to existing members of staff**
- (3) That the current work undertaken with schools be expanded**
- (4) That a Briefing Note explaining the Levy Fund be sent to all Members**
- (5) That officers be requested to submit a further report detailing progress on this issue to the Cabinet Member in 3 months time.**

35. Outstanding Issues

The Cabinet Member noted a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that identified those issues on which further reports had been requested and were outstanding so that progress could be monitored.

36. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 10.50 am)